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General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
10th meeting
held on
Monday, 18 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 107: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued)*

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)*

(a) RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

* Items considered together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/48/18, A/48/76-S/25230, A/48/81, A/48/118, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/423, 438 and 439)

AGENDA ITEM 108: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

(a) RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/48/94, 207, 211, 307, 330, 357, 384 and 385)

1. Mr. SLABY (Czech Republic) said that the complete dismantling of apartheid in South Africa should be achieved by exclusively peaceful means. Although it was disheartening that racially motivated violence and clashes between the various groups were continuing in that country, his Government welcomed the agreement to hold multiracial elections and set up a transitional executive council. Racial intolerance existed in all parts of the world. It was disturbing that ethnic and racial intolerance, particularly with regard to migrant workers and refugees, was increasing also in Europe. The Czech Republic therefore noted with satisfaction the results of the recent summit of the Council of Europe, which had adopted a complex plan of action to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

2. The horrifying manifestations of ethnic hatred in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to genocide. The perpetrators of those outrageous acts must be brought to justice. Accordingly, his delegation welcomed the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and hoped that the tribunal could start work as soon as possible.

3. The Czech Republic supported the draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination, which was an appropriate framework for pragmatic, concrete action. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities should play a key role in that regard. The United Nations must continue to promote the implementation of relevant international legal instruments, particularly the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. There was a need to maintain constructive dialogue with States parties whose reports were overdue and consider developments in those States on the basis of previous reports and other available information. His delegation welcomed the measures taken by the Secretary-General to finance the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination through the regular budget and underscored the need for States parties to carry out fully all their obligations. The Government of the Czech Republic had assumed all the commitments under the Convention which the former Czechoslovakia had undertaken and intended to abide by them.

4. The international community must take further measures to deal with all forms of racism and racial discrimination. His Government therefore supported the decision by the Commission on Human Rights to appoint a special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance, whose reports to the Commission would be a very good basis

(Mr. Slaby, Czech Republic)

for identifying major problems and preventing the emergence of new hotbeds of tension.

5. The Czech Republic fully recognized the right of peoples to self-determination as a basic principle of international human rights law. That right could be achieved only in a democratic society guaranteeing the real possibility of taking part in the conduct of public affairs. Free, regular and genuine elections were of paramount importance in that regard. The main purpose of implementation of that right should be to create conditions for the free economic, social and cultural development of peoples as a whole and should not be limited to questions of territorial change. On the other hand, no separatist movement should be viewed solely as an attempt to exercise the right to self-determination. It should always be considered in the context of other principles of international law, in particular the principle of territorial integrity.

6. Mr. AL-KINDI (United Arab Emirates) commended the role of the United Nations in assisting peoples to exercise the right of self-determination and acquire their legitimate rights. Being opposed to all forms of racial discrimination and human-rights violations, his country welcomed the negotiated agreement in South Africa; it was a step towards a permanent agreement aimed at achieving a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa where the people could enjoy their fundamental freedoms and devote their energies to economic and social development. His country would endeavour to assist in strengthening democracy in South Africa and in achieving that development, in which connection he endorsed Nelson Mandela's call for the lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

7. His country advocated approval of the draft programme of action for the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination.

8. With reference to item 108, he said that the United Nations would not achieve universality unless its membership included peoples who had hitherto been unable to exercise self-determination. By the same token, it rejected all forms of imperialism and vehemently condemned military intervention and the occupation of territory by force.

9. His country welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, as a first step towards a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of United Nations resolutions. It also urged implementation of Security Council 425 (1978) calling on Israel to withdraw from all Lebanese territory.

10. As a result of the recent global changes, racial discrimination had intensified in certain areas of the world; one example was provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the blatant atrocities and inhuman practices based on racial, ethnic and religious discrimination contradicted the United Nations Charter and international human rights instruments. His country therefore endorsed the United Nations resolutions on that subject, particularly concerning the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former

(Mr. Al-Kindi, United Arab Emirates)

Yugoslavia, and thus put an end to the tragedy being enacted. The defence and safeguarding of Bosnia and Herzegovina would test the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations.

11. Mr. NASSIROV (Azerbaijan) said that it was very difficult at the current time to bring into harmony the right of peoples to self-determination and the principle of the territorial integrity of States. There was growing concern in the United Nations system at the unjustified tendency to interpret the right to self-determination as the right of any ethnic or national community to establish its own State. In accordance with basic United Nations instruments, the right to self-determination did not justify violations of the principle of the independence and territorial integrity of States. There had been a number of recent cases where the right to self-determination had been used in an attempt to justify territorial expansion under the guise of protecting related ethnic groups in other countries. In such cases, the implementation by one ethnic group of the right to self-determination sometimes led to violations of the basic rights of other ethnic groups and even "ethnic cleansing".

12. The Republic of Armenia, after becoming independent in 1991, had expelled from its territory 215,000 of its nationals merely because they were ethnic Azerbaijanis. Armenia had then undertaken the task of implementing the right to self-determination of ethnic Armenians in neighbouring Azerbaijan, where the Armenian community in Nagorny Karabakh had had autonomous status, including complete political, economic, social and cultural rights. Subsequently, Armenia had committed direct aggression against Azerbaijan and expelled 50,000 Azerbaijanis from Nagorny Karabakh. In order to undergird the idea of "self-determination", Armenia had established a "humanitarian" corridor to Nagorny Karabakh as a channel for supplying weapons, ammunition and manpower. As a result, Armenia had occupied a sector of Azerbaijani territory that was four times larger than the area of Nagorny Karabakh and subjected it to total ethnic cleansing. In that way, the process which the Republic of Armenia attempted to depict as implementation of the right to self-determination of the Armenian community in Nagorny Karabakh, which numbered 120,000 persons, had led to the forced displacement of more than 1 million Azerbaijanis and the death of tens of thousands of people.

13. It was clear that the Armenian community in Nagorny Karabakh, even if it had wanted to, would not have been able to achieve such astounding results without considerable foreign assistance. Accordingly, it was a case not of the implementation of the right to self-determination, but rather of the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of another State. That was borne out by the fact that as early as 1989, the Armenian Parliament had adopted an unprecedented decision to unite the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan with Armenia, in other words, to annex part of the territory of a neighbouring State.

14. In order to prevent bloodshed and war, the international community must carefully consider each specific case involving demands for self-determination and must clearly distinguish between self-determination and aggression. As a result of Armenian aggression, more than a million Azerbaijani refugees and displaced persons were receiving humanitarian assistance generously provided by many countries and international organizations, for which the Azerbaijani

(Mr. Nassirov, Azerbaijan)

Republic was most grateful. Nevertheless, the donor countries could have used those resources to meet their own needs if the international community had assessed the situation in time and prevented increased aggression.

15. Mr. AL-TAEE (Oman) said that his country had always attached great importance to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. As a long-standing advocate of a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem on the basis of United Nations resolutions and land for peace, it had participated in the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East, the multilateral negotiations and various committees on the subject. Commending the role played by the United Nations in the Middle East conflict, he welcomed the Palestinian-Israeli agreement as a first step towards a lasting peace and stressed the need for more than moral support from the international community.

16. Turning to the appalling human tragedy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he regretted that calls from the international community for compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions had been in vain. While commending the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations to alleviate the suffering, he said that the main responsibility for taking measures to end the conflict lay with Europe. He concluded by welcoming the positive developments in South Africa; the prominent role played by the United Nations had undoubtedly been highly effective in producing the desired results, which should ultimately enable the people of South Africa to exercise its legitimate rights.

17. Mr. KIM JAE HON (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that it was deplorable that, despite the efforts of the international community, millions of human beings continued to be victims of various forms of racism and racial discrimination. His delegation therefore welcomed the proposed launching of the third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination and felt that the international community should redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racism.

18. His country welcomed the progress made towards achieving a lasting settlement of the Palestinian question and strongly believed that it would be a first step leading to full restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish a sovereign State, and to a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question in the interest of the Arab people as a whole.

19. It was also heartening to witness the positive developments in South Africa, which resulted from concerted action by the international community and the determined efforts of the majority of peoples in that country. His Government welcomed the agreement to hold multiracial elections in 1994 and establish a transitional executive council, which would finally pave the way for a united non-racial and democratic South Africa. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea continued to advocate the elimination of all forms of racism and supported the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial rule to exercise the right to self-determination. His delegation would continue to play a role in bringing about a world free of all forms of racism, racial discrimination and foreign domination.

20. Ms. SAMONTE-LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that her country had always supported measures pursued under the aegis of the United Nations to redress the violation of the right of peoples to self-determination. While the recruitment of mercenaries violated human rights and impeded the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination, the facility with which some countries accused others of that practice without prior verification was also a cause for great concern. She shared the view that the right to self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would disrupt the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Indeed, the realization of the right to self-determination was nurtured by tolerance and responsible governance and sustained by firm political will.

21. While the recently concluded accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization offered hope that other seemingly intractable conflicts elsewhere would be solved, namely that the transition to a democratic non-racial nation in South Africa would be peaceful, racial and ethnic tensions in other parts of the world had spawned new forms of human rights abuses such as ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia which the international community must make every effort to stop. The influx of labour from poor developing countries to more affluent developed ones had triggered tensions that in some cases led to violence against immigrants. Women migrant workers in particular were placed in double jeopardy as a result of their gender and alien status.

22. The proposed proclamation of a third decade to combat racism and racial discrimination and the observance of a year for tolerance in 1995 were very timely indeed. In that regard, the strengthening of existing human rights mechanisms would greatly aid in the prevention of discrimination, and regional arrangements could be very useful in promoting and protecting human rights. The United Nations should shift its attention from crisis-oriented actions to far-sighted measures.

23. Mr. SACIRBEY (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, while he welcomed the international community's strenuous efforts to integrate South Africa it was ironic that the same community had practically played accomplice in segregating Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the past 19 months, more than half of the original Bosnian population, especially Muslims and Catholics, had been the victims of a multitude of abuses perpetrated by the ultra nationalist and fascist Belgrade regime in pursuit of its dream of a "Greater Serbia". Most of the efforts made by the international community to bring peace to the region had been fruitless because of the intransigence and appetite of the Belgrade regime coupled with a strategy of appeasement pursued by the international community. According to the International Court of Justice, the heinous crimes committed by the Belgrade regime constituted genocide. The democratically elected Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina had, from its inception, endeavoured to maintain the country's tradition of pluralism and multiculturalism, which had unfortunately been undermined by the international arms embargo. Rather than being checked, the forces that disregarded Security Council resolutions and committed murder and rape and were denounced as war criminals had amazingly been legitimized at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Genocide had been abetted by appeasement. The argument that the current rampant racism in Bosnia and

(Mr. Sacirbey, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Herzegovina was the product of age-old ethnic hatreds was completely false. On the contrary, Bosnia and Herzegovina had a long tradition of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution.

24. In order to combat racism and stabilize the Balkans, the international community must not allow the Government of Serbia - clearly the biggest threat to Balkan stability - to destroy human rights wherever it pleased. He called on the United Nations to do its utmost to ensure the success of the International Tribunal established to prosecute persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia, and welcomed the resolution adopted by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-fifth session.

25. Mrs. BARGHOUTI (Observer for Palestine) said that although genuine efforts had been made to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination, many people throughout the world still suffered from discrimination, inequality and denial of their fundamental human rights in addition to the denial of their right to self-determination. In that regard, the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination had been on the agenda of the United Nations since 1949. The General Assembly had repeatedly examined the problem of the subjugation of the Palestinian people, who for years had been subject to the most brutal forms of oppression and discrimination at the hands of the Israeli military authorities. The establishment and expansion of Israeli settlements, the closure and isolation of areas in the occupied territories and the killing of defenceless Palestinian civilians continued despite recent positive developments.

26. The Palestine Liberation Organization had been engaged in all levels of the Middle East peace process in the hope of achieving peace and ending the occupation and harsh treatment meted out to the Palestinian people. The signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements between the PLO and Israel constituted a very important step towards achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It also demonstrated how serious the Palestinians were about resolving the conflict in a peaceful manner. She called upon the General Assembly to reaffirm once again the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to take immediate action to end their suffering. Her delegation hoped that in the light of the recent encouraging developments such a position would receive unanimous support.

27. Mr. ETEFFA (Ethiopia) said that his delegation was encouraged by the promising developments in South Africa and welcomed the decision to hold multi-racial elections and establish a transitional executive council to supervise the process of achieving a united, non-racial and democratic country. Accordingly, Ethiopia called upon all parties concerned to halt violence and pave the way for political dialogue, compromise and tolerance. His delegation also welcomed the agreement on mutual recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel and hoped that it would lead to a comprehensive and peaceful political settlement in the Middle East as a whole.

(Mr. Eteffa, Ethiopia)

28. Although the achievements in South Africa and the Middle East were commendable, there were regrettably many areas of grave concern around the world. Atrocities and vicious crimes continued unabated, as demonstrated by the tragic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international community could not let such crimes go unpunished and those responsible must be brought to justice. The concept that injustice anywhere was a threat to justice everywhere should be a guiding principle.

29. Self-determination was inseparably linked to human rights and democratic decision-making. As important as they were, the principles of self-determination, non-interference in internal affairs and territorial integrity should not condemn peoples to perpetual domination and injustice. In order to ensure that the implementation of the right to self-determination was based on the desire of an entire people and not political parties alone, it should be based on referendums verified by impartial bodies.

30. In some instances, that right had been implemented after many years of civil war and bloodshed, as in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Previous Ethiopian regimes had refused to recognize the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination and had brought about untold destruction, both in terms of human lives and material resources. Self-determination in Eritrea was therefore part of a broader peacemaking process. There was no alternative to peace based on justice, equality, human dignity and fairness. Lasting peace required sacrifice, compromise and commitment to the well-being of individuals. The civilized separation of Slovakia and the Czech Republic served as a good example in that respect. While separation was not smooth and without cost, it was more cost-effective if the alternative was war.

31. The right to self-determination should be seen in the framework of peace and development as well as its relationship to human rights. All parties concerned should consider self-determination as part of an overall process of peacemaking, peace-building and preventive diplomacy, which were essential to prevent the devastation of war. In the case of Ethiopia and Eritrea, refusal to recognize the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination would have meant the continuation of a bloody war, which was beyond the physical, moral and psychological capability of Ethiopia. Accordingly, the transitional Government of Ethiopia was committed to dealing with the causes of conflicts, rather than the symptoms. Unity must be based on the free choice of the peoples concerned.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
11th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484; E/1993/50/Rev.1; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3, L.4)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to begin its consideration of agenda item 109 and drew its attention to the documentation under that item. He noted that the three draft resolutions which the Economic and Social Council had recommended to the General Assembly for adoption were available in documents A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3 and L.4. He also recalled that the General Assembly, at its 112th plenary meeting of the forty-seventh session on 20 September 1993, had adopted a draft resolution entitled "International Year of the Family", which had been recommended to it by the Economic and Social Council. That resolution (A/RES/47/237) contained several provisions which called for immediate action, in particular, preparations for the plenary meeting to be held in early December to launch the Year. For details, he referred delegations to document A/47/1011.

2. Mr. BAUDOT (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and Coordinator of the World Summit for Social Development), introducing agenda item 109, pointed out that social development was a difficult concept on account of the diversity of social systems, which were rooted in different historical and cultural traditions. Yet, much had been achieved, particularly through the Committee, in helping to clarify concepts, define issues, raise awareness of the problems, develop standards and point the way to action by countries singly or collectively.

3. Progress had been made in changing attitudes and promoting greater understanding, particularly with regard to older persons and to persons with disabilities. That progress, however, had been of limited scope, since the challenges in that field could never be completely overcome.

4. With regard to disability, the Committee was expected at its current session to consider a draft resolution entitled "Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities", recommended by the Economic and Social Council on the basis of a draft submitted to the Council by the Commission for Social Development, at the latter's most recent Vienna session in February. He wished to record the Secretariat's appreciation to those Governments which, through their generous contributions, had made it possible for an ad hoc open-ended working group to hold a series of meetings at which the Rules in question had been elaborated. He hoped that those Rules could be adopted at the Committee's current session.

5. The Third Committee should also consider the question of the long-term strategy for the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the year 2000 and beyond. There had been some delay in the elaboration of that strategy, owing to some differences of emphasis among Member States regarding the sequence of steps in the strategy. The progress achieved so far had been summarized in the informal background information note which had been circulated to members of the Committee. That note contained the framework

AGENDA ITEM 92: EXTERNAL DEBT CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/338, A/48/345, A/48/353-S/26372)

7. Mr. NEBIE (Burkina Faso), citing statistics in the report of the Secretary-General on the international debt strategy as of mid-1993 (A/48/345), said that the total foreign debt of African countries had increased by more than 100 per cent in the past 10 years, while that of countries in sub-Saharan Africa had increased by more than 150 per cent. Debt and debt-servicing payments amounted to more than 11 per cent of the 1993 budget of his country, which with only meagre export earnings and a structural adjustment programme under way, required special attention.

8. Although the successes of the international strategy to manage the debt of the developing countries were welcome, further measures were needed to assist the developing countries, in particular, the least developed among them. His delegation favoured the complete cancellation of the bilateral public debt of the least developed countries and the prompt implementation of effective measures substantially to reduce their debt and debt-servicing costs with respect to loans from multilateral financial institutions and commercial creditors. His country was grateful to those parties which had already cancelled their share of his country's debt and pledged to continue to meet its obligation.

9. In conclusion, he underscored his delegation's belief that a lasting solution to the debt crisis would be found only if the measures already taken and those which were desired were accompanied by the establishment of a fair and equitable multilateral trading system and a re-evaluation of the terms of trade.

10. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) said that the external debt crisis had consistently been dealt with in a piecemeal, sporadic and inadequate manner. Debt relief approaches had not been applied to all types of debt, which meant that many highly indebted countries did not receive relief. The problem was compounded by the fact that there was no single forum to deal with the total foreign debt portfolio. The absence of any formal mechanism to restructure the multilateral debt of developing countries also had obliged them to borrow to relieve pressure on their balance of payments, thereby further increasing the debt burden of many low-income developing countries. Despite increased financial flows to some parts of the developing world, the most vulnerable economies continued to face stagnating commodity prices, inadequate and stagnating development financing and a negative transfer of resources.

11. Concerted action by the industrialized countries to alleviate the debt burden of the developing countries would promote growth in the developing world, which in turn was critical to the growth of the world economy. Some highly indebted middle-income countries which had benefited from the Baker and Brady Plans had enjoyed a remarkable increase in access to private financing, which had enhanced their external economic viability.

12. The debt crisis in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, required urgent and immediate measures. It was regrettable that the seven major industrialized countries had been unable to reach agreement on the implementation of the

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

proposed "Trinidad terms", which had been designed to provide greater debt relief for low-income countries. The special measures taken by the French Government with regard to the bilateral official debt of a small number of debtor countries were commendable, and were worthy of emulation by other creditor countries.

13. Deliberations on the question of external debt must not ignore the increasing difficulties faced by low-income countries whose debt was largely from official bilateral or multilateral sources. Most of those countries had managed their economies prudently and had met their obligations in full, but at a heavy cost to their people in social terms. The structural adjustment process must not be pushed to the point where serious social and political disruptions might ensue. Low-income countries, which included his own, thus far had been bypassed by all debt initiatives. The financial situation of low-income countries such as his own must be viewed comprehensively, and innovative mechanisms must be devised to allow them to continue to grow and reach the point at which they could finance their own growth through commercial borrowing and foreign investment.

14. A durable solution to the debt problem would remain elusive without a marked improvement in the international economic environment. Reduced interest rates, innovative debt relief measures, an end to protectionism, enhanced cooperation for technology transfers and the stabilization of commodity prices were some of the elements needed.

15. Mr. HADID (Algeria) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The economic difficulties facing the developing countries were to a large extent attributable to their external debt, which had become critical. The African countries had the highest ratios of debt to gross national product (GNP) and exports. For most African and many other countries the net transfer of resources remained negative. Even where the transfer had become positive, the flow of resources was not sufficient to contribute in any significant measure to the financing of investment. Thus, as capital flows towards and direct investment in the developing countries declined, external debt continued to cause large net transfers of resources from the developing countries to the developed countries, which were accentuated by unstable exchange rates and high interest rates. Debt service seriously jeopardized the growth potential and development strategies of the developing countries, which were undertaking bold economic reforms and structural adjustment programmes. By swallowing up available funds and slowing foreign investment, external debt aggravated the political and social tensions produced by structural adjustment. External debt continued to be perceived and managed from a strictly financial point of view in the sole interest of the creditor countries and organizations, although it constituted a major political problem which required a global and concerted approach.

16. The selective and limited nature of recent debt-reduction and debt-conservation initiatives clearly demonstrated that such initiatives were designed to enable the international system to recover its debts, rather than to help the developing countries to surmount their difficulties. In order to deal effectively with the debt crisis, there should be a significant reduction of the

(Mr. Hadid, Algeria)

debt and debt service of the developing countries. Such an approach should form an essential, although non-exclusive component of any international strategy aimed at an equitable and definitive settlement of the external debt crisis of the developing countries. The creditor countries, institutions and banks and the debtor countries should engage in a new dialogue which took full account of the effects of the global transition under way, and make the necessary efforts to find a lasting and global solution for all types of debt and debtor countries. Particular attention should be devoted to the middle-income African countries, which had not benefited from any significant debt-reduction measures, as well as to those countries that, despite an unfavourable external situation, continued to honour their repayment obligations at considerable social and political cost to themselves.

17. Any solution of the external debt problem must be accompanied by a tangible improvement in the international economic environment. In that connection, the Secretary-General's proposal, made at the summer 1991 session of the Economic and Social Council, regarding the convening of an international conference on the financing of development, should be seriously reconsidered since it would provide a suitable forum for dialogue and proposals. Growth and economic development could be promoted by strengthening and liberalizing the international trade system and by stimulating commodity exports, inter alia, by ensuring better prices.

18. Mr. ALDOSARI (Bahrain) said that the external debt crisis as reflected by the high external debt indicators for the capital-importing developing countries for the period 1982-1992 was having an adverse impact on development and international stability. External debt had continued to grow, reaching $1.4 trillion in 1992. In order to alleviate the debt crisis, the international trade system should be strengthened and national policies revised. The debtor countries should increase their savings and investment rates and seek to attract long-term capital flows. In addition, there was a need for increased trade and greater access to markets. It was important to guarantee the social welfare of those groups most affected by economic reforms in the debtor countries, in particular the low-income groups, in order to ensure social and political stability. International programmes should aim at global and durable debt relief in order to lay the foundations for development and to close the gap between developing and developed countries, as well as to reduce poverty and promote education, health and housing.

19. Mrs. MAIKARFI (Niger) associated her delegation with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. Although a number of steps had been taken to alleviate the debt crisis in many countries, progress had been achieved only on specific categories of debt and was not sufficient to guarantee the developing countries the international capital and investment they needed to resume growth. Moreover, that progress had been confined mainly to the Asian countries, most of which were undergoing exceptional growth. The situation in sub-Saharan Africa remained extremely critical. The structure of external debt in Africa had not changed greatly since 1991. Commercial debt had stagnated owing to the increasing insolvency of many countries. Despite debt-relief measures, public debt had grown by 3.7 per cent, and a number of countries had been unable to fulfil their debt-service obligations. The

(Mrs. Maikarfi, Niger)

Organization of African Unity (OAU) had therefore called for a re-evaluation of the situation and had appealed to the international community to reinforce existing mechanisms and to establish new ones to address the problem satisfactorily.

20. Her delegation appealed to the creditor countries to demonstrate their political will to contribute to a radical solution of the debt crisis by showing greater solidarity and cancelling the entire debt of the least developed countries. Her country had hoped that the Group of Seven would take a decision to that effect when they met in Tokyo in July. However, they had not taken any vigorous action to enhance the reimbursement capacity of the debtor countries. She did not agree with the conclusion in paragraph 53 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/345) that solving the debt problem of the developing countries would not ipso facto solve their development problem. Elimination of the debt burden would contribute decisively to development since it would free funds for social and environmental investment and thereby stimulate the economy. Priority should therefore be given to the complete cancelling of the debt of the least developed countries, to debt-relief for other developing countries, to the reallocation of funds from debt-service to the financing of economic and social projects and to making widespread use of debt-for-nature swaps, which helped to promote a country's environment and economic situation at one and the same time.

21. Mr. BANGALI (Sierra Leone) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77. External debt and debt-servicing continued to impose severe constraints on his country's economic growth. There was total stagnation of development programmes, and the Government was unable to meet the basic social needs of the people. In addition to the unfavourable global economic environment, Sierra Leone's situation was further worsened by the rebel war imposed on it from Liberia, which placed an exorbitant burden on the country and considerably reduced the resources available for key sectors of the economy. Sierra Leone had had to increase its debt level thereby jeopardizing its future socio-economic prosperity. It could no longer reimburse or even service its debts and was caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and indebtedness. His delegation therefore intended to introduce a resolution calling for international economic assistance for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the devastated areas of Sierra Leone.

22. While there had been several important developments in international debt policy in the past year, there was still room for further debt relief measures and the management of bilateral debt. The Paris Club should ensure a wider application of the concept of eligibility under the enhanced Trinidad terms to cover a large number of low-income debtor countries. For many developing countries the debt problem had become critical. In conclusion, he expressed his gratitude to all those countries that had rescheduled Sierra Leone's debts and to the few that had actually cancelled some of those debts. The establishment by the developed countries of a global debt cancellation mechanism would be an important step towards solving the debt crisis and alleviating poverty in the developing countries.

23. Miss OCAMPO (Philippines) said that there were two ways to alleviate the debt problem: either indirectly, by helping indebted developing countries to increase their national income in order to have greater resources with which to pay their external debt; or directly, by condoning, cancelling or writing off the debts.

24. The most significant elements of the indirect method of assisting indebted developing countries were production and trade. Production covered not only all sectors of the national economy but also product diversification, enhancement of productivity and pursuit of comparative-advantage opportunities. However, all the production efforts of indebted developing countries would be irrelevant as long as access to the markets of industrialized countries was barred by protectionist policies and onerous tariff or non-tariff barriers.

25. While the efficacy of the various debt-reduction or debt-service schemes, as well as innovative swap arrangements, could not be denied, those measures were not sufficient to wipe out the developing countries' $1.4 trillion debt. Her delegation was convinced that the best solution was debt cancellation in accord with a realistic assessment of a country's capacity to pay. The scope of the Toronto and Trinidad terms for least developed countries should be broadened to include low- and lower-middle-income countries.

26. The United Nations was a useful forum for focusing international attention on the external debt problem. Governments of creditor countries, either individually or collectively, had proposed solutions to the problem, and at the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development many delegations had appealed for debt reduction and debt condonation and cancellation. Debt cancellation might require not only close coordination between Governments and the creditor banks under their jurisdiction but also a heroic degree of political will. It was high time for the States Members of the United Nations to manifest that political will.

27. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana) said that, more than any other issue, the debt burden was undermining opportunities for the recovery and growth of African economies. The international strategy to address the social and political dimensions of external debt, which involved debtor as well as creditor countries, should therefore be reappraised. The debt crisis was hampering efforts to increase world output and to restructure and integrate the economies of developing countries fully into the world economy.

28. The international strategy for resolving the debt crisis had failed to remove completely the underlying causes of the crisis. As the crisis deepened in the poor and low-income countries, their capacity to attract foreign direct investment was further weakened, thus depriving them of opportunities that would enable them to meet their peoples' basic needs. Low commodity prices, protectionist measures, currency instability and many other factors placed severe constraints on the development efforts of developing countries that were already overburdened with debt.

29. Existing official debt-reduction schemes had failed to improve the difficult situation of debtor countries. While debt-reduction schemes

(Mr. Naadjie, Ghana)

negotiated by individual developing countries were practical, they provided only short-term solutions and did not affect the international financial relations considered crucial to any solution of the crisis.

30. The first step towards achieving the start for a lasting solution should be the outright cancellation of the debt of the world's poorest and most severely indebted countries. That should be followed by other measures that should include action on all categories of external debt, whether bilateral, multilateral or commercial. The greatest boost the rich industrialized nations could give to world economic recovery was to design and implement a comprehensive debt-cancellation mechanism that would enable every national economy to grow.

31. Mr. BURKURU (Burundi), after endorsing the statement on external debt crisis and development made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the external debt burden of the African economies was having a negative effect on sustainable development and was even threatening development. Export earnings were being swallowed up by debt-service payments instead of being used to meet the basic needs of the population. In sub-Saharan Africa, the debt-to-GNP ratio and the debt-to-export ratio were almost three times the average for all developing countries. More than 50 per cent of Burundi's export earnings were used to service its external debt. His delegation therefore welcomed the various initiatives that had been taken to alleviate the external debt of developing countries.

32. His delegation called upon the multilateral financial institutions to take more vigorous measures to manage the debt crisis of the developing countries. One way of solving the problem would be to cancel the debt owed to those institutions by the poorest countries whose economic recovery would be impossible unless their external debt was cancelled. In addition to measures to alleviate the adverse effects of debt on the economies of developing countries, the principal creditor countries should endeavour to increase development financing.

33. Mr. MURIITHI (Kenya) said that the debt burden of developing countries had retarded their development efforts and their ability to provide such essential social and economic services as housing, education, health care and food. The situation was further exacerbated by the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes, the diminishing flow of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries, the sharp fall in commodity prices and escalating protectionism in the developed countries.

34. In his report (A/48/345), the Secretary-General highlighted a number of measures being taken by the international community to alleviate the debt burden of the developing countries. However, those measures by and large covered only bilateral debt. The debt owed by developing countries to multilateral financial institutions had not changed and there was no formal framework for restructuring it. A study should be undertaken to examine what debt-relief measures could be taken by multilateral financial institutions to put in place innovative measures to alleviate the debt owed to them by developing countries.

35. Mr. SEQUEIRA (Nicaragua) said that as yet there was no sign among the developed economies of the political will needed to reach a comprehensive solution. The level of debt had increased substantially as a result of renegotiations which were aimed at ensuring the solvency of the international financial system rather than that of debtor countries.

36. Steps taken thus far had greatly alleviated the debt problem for some high- and middle-income developing countries with broader and more diversified economies, but they had not addressed the special conditions affecting low-income countries. Nicaragua itself had the world's highest per capita debt in relative terms. Without a swift and radical solution, the economic and social reconstruction of Nicaragua would be practically impossible. The mechanisms applied to commercial debt were out of reach for low-income countries because of their limited ability to buy back debt. It was a cause for concern that any rescheduling of multilateral debt-servicing obligations was forbidden and debt owed to such institutions was the only category of developing-country debt that had no formal restructuring framework. Nicaragua had honoured its payment agreements, but there were limits to its ability to continue doing so given the social and political reality in which economic adjustment programmes were administered. What was best from a technical standpoint was not necessarily viable in the social and political context.

37. In order to achieve a just and lasting solution, the debtor countries must work with the developed countries, taking into account the shared responsibility of both debtors and creditors. In the international context, steps must be taken to improve the terms of trade, particularly commodity prices, dismantle protectionism and eliminate agricultural subsidies granted by some developed countries. Thus, more competitive conditions would be created for the developing countries with a resulting decline in demand for financial resources to stabilize the balance of payments, and therefore, an increase in the ability to repay debt without affecting economic growth.

38. Mr. CALOVSKI (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that his country would not be able to solve its debt problems without international support. Like many other countries in transition and developing countries, its debt crisis was far from over. At its current session, the General Assembly must give priority to the resolution of the debt crisis, for there could be no improvement in the international situation and no development for many countries unless the debt crisis was resolved.

39. Mr. SWETJA (Indonesia) said that, although aggregate debt indicators had improved, excessive indebtedness remained a constraint to the prospects of many severely indebted low- and lower-middle-income countries, especially in Africa. Even in Asia, indebtedness was still rising. Thus it would be premature to state that the debt crisis was largely over. Developed and developing countries alike should employ sound economic policies and pursue confidence-building strategies of economic adjustment that would help build domestic savings and attract investments and long-term capital inflows for developing countries. The developed countries would gain from the resulting increased stability in international financial flows and exchange rates as well as the potential benefits of enhanced international trade. The developed countries obviously had

(Mr. Swetja, Indonesia)

a greater impact on the external environment; thus, a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations would generate hundreds of billions of dollars in increased trade. Likewise, if commodity prices could be stabilized at levels fair to both producers and consumers, many of the commodity-dependent developing countries would be in a better position to grow out of their debt problems.

40. In order to achieve a development-oriented debt strategy, the tripartite approach, involving developing debtor countries, creditor countries and the relevant financial institutions, must be strengthened. The stock and service of debt, particularly for low-income, highly-indebted developing countries, must be further reduced. Indonesia had learned from its own experience that repeated rescheduling of loans did not work. A better approach would be to give the most severely indebted countries substantial debt and debt-service reductions in a single operation, rather than in stages. The international community should adopt the Trinidad terms in order to strengthen that comprehensive strategy. Furthermore, the eligibility criteria should be applied less rigidly so that a larger number of countries could benefit. South-South cooperation could also contribute significantly to resolving the debt crisis.

41. Resolving the debt problem of developing countries would not in itself solve their development problems. In order to achieve the goals of development, there must be a democratic partnership and a constructive dialogue between debtors and creditors and relevant financial institutions.

42. Mr. DIAZ (Venezuela) said that although there had been some positive developments in the strategies aimed at reduction of debt and debt-servicing, such as those implemented by the Paris Club for low-income countries, his delegation did not believe that the debt issue should disappear from the international agenda. It was no secret that the efforts of developing countries to correct their economic imbalances, adjust their balance of payments and achieve fair access in international trade were being undermined by the structural adjustment measures that were being implemented by many developing countries and by the growing protectionism of the international economic environment. In countries such as his own, that was resulting in serious political, economic and social instability that was jeopardizing democratic institutions. Thus, it was more important than ever to retain that item on the agenda. His delegation therefore suggested that consideration be given to the possibility of rearranging the payment terms for highly-indebted developing countries and called for the swift and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round, which would establish the minimum conditions for fair trade thereby allowing growth in developing countries.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
12th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 20 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

later: Mrs. Al-HAMANI (Yemen)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. Mr. BUNCH (Chief, Programme and Documentation Planning Section, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development), referring to the submission of reports and draft resolutions, invited members to refer to General Assembly decision 47/432, in particular, annex I, section E, and annex II.

2. Under the current programme of work, which had been in effect since the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Committee followed two parallel procedures. He drew a distinction between (i) the documentation to be submitted to the Third Committee in 1993 and 1994 as specified in annex II of decision 47/432; those documents were to be issued pursuant to mandates emanating from various draft resolutions; and (ii) matters on the Third Committee's agenda, listed in annex I, section E of decision 47/432, regarding which the Committee was to consider a draft resolution at its current session, on either an annual or biennial basis.

3. The two procedures normally should perfectly coincide, i.e., any document before the Third Committee should be accompanied by a draft resolution. However, that was not always the case since, for example, certain reports were submitted annually but dealt with matters which, in accordance with the biennial programme of work, were to be the subject of a draft resolution only every two years, as was the case for the report of the Committee against Torture and the report on the status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Racial Discrimination, neither of which would be the subject of a draft resolution during the current session.

4. Towards the end of its work at the current session, the Third Committee would consider a draft programme of work for 1994-1995 prepared by the Secretariat containing the list of documents which it would have before it during those two years, as well as a dual list of issues that would be the subject of either annual or biennial draft resolutions. If the Committee wished a draft resolution to be submitted each year on an issue belonging to the biennial category in the programme of work for 1993-1994, it could take the appropriate decision when it considered its draft programme of work at the current session. He would be pleased to assist members of the Committee who had any doubts or hesitations on the question.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484, E/1993/50/Rev.1, A/C.3/48/L.2-L.4)

5. Mrs. CLAESSON WATSBERG (Sweden), addressing the question of disabled persons, who were prevented by many barriers from exercising their human rights, said that it was at the European regional meeting on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons held at Ljubljana in March 1987, that the question of a convention on the rights of persons with

(Mrs. Claesson Watsberg, Sweden)

disabilities had been raised for the first time, by two women, one of whom was Swedish, a demonstration of her country's long-standing interest in the subject.

6. A primary objective of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons adopted by the General Assembly in 1982 and of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had been to establish the equality and full participation of disabled persons in society. Progress towards that end had been reviewed at the mid-point of the Decade at a meeting of international experts which had taken place at Stockholm in 1987 under the aegis of the United Nations and her Government. However, when the issue had been debated in 1987 in the General Assembly, delegations had failed to agree on the appropriateness of such a convention, for some feared that it would duplicate existing human rights instruments and that it would marginalize disabled persons. It was against that background that the draft Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities should be viewed. On the initiative of her country in the Economic and Social Council in 1990, an ad hoc open-ended working group of Government experts had been established for that purpose in 1991 by the Commission for Social Development. Her delegation called for the prompt adoption of those Rules by the General Assembly, for they would constitute a major step forward in the promotion of human rights and for progress in general.

7. However, while the Rules were fundamentally useful, there was a risk that the norms for men also might become the norm for women with disabilities. That was why gender-based statistical data were important. The living conditions of women with disabilities had received little attention at the Nairobi World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women held in 1985. They must not be forgotten in 1995. To that end, it was important to ensure that women with disabilities were included in the committees preparing for the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and in the national delegations participating in that Conference. The international development body of the Swedish disabled movement had established a working committee for women with functional impairments. A questionnaire had been circulated during 1993 to women in disabled persons' organizations in countries cooperating with that body in order to obtain a clearer picture of the situation of that group of women.

8. If they were to be effective, the Rules must include an implementation mechanism and an international monitoring system. The Commission for Social Development should regularly review progress made by Member States, identify obstacles and suggest measures to overcome them.

9. Now that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons was over, the problems of that group must not be viewed as a separate concern. It was important that they be integrated in all United Nations activities. The United Nations must elaborate concrete plans to integrate them in all relevant situations. Funds must be set aside to that end in the regular budget. The proposed Special Rapporteur was an important element of the follow-up process. It would be advantageous if the Rapporteur had personal experience with functional impairments. It was equally essential that the panel with which the Rapporteur was to cooperate included representatives of persons with disabilities and a sufficient number of women with disabilities.

(Mrs. Claesson Watsberg, Sweden)

10. A long-term strategy was needed to implement the Rules in a systematic manner. Work on the issue should proceed in a way that would enable the General Assembly to decide on such a strategy in 1994.

11. She drew attention to new legislation adopted by her country's Parliament in May 1993 concerning the right of persons with disabilities to personal assistance, i.e., the right to have an assistant accompany the functionally impaired person wherever he or she went and to provide that person with all necessary services. That measure was an important breakthrough, since it assured persons with disabilities independence, freedom of choice and privacy. That explained why her country would continue to insist on the need for the speedy adoption and implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

12. Mr. KONKOBO (Burkina Faso) said that social, economic and political changes and the process of democratization had brought social development, among other urgent global issues, to the forefront. None the less, the social landscape of the planet was eroding from year to year. The gap between developed and developing countries continued to widen, owing to the intransigence of the prosperous and the powerlessness of the underprivileged. Increasing inequalities were a source of social tension and conflict between and within individual nations. There would be no social harmony unless the economic imbalance was corrected in favour of the large majority of the world's population. Unfortunately, for the time being, there was no other solution for the developing countries but the painful therapy of structural adjustment programmes.

13. His delegation reiterated its message to the Second Committee at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, namely that the success of those programmes was, unfortunately, conditioned by an international economic situation that was unfavourable to the developing countries, the absence of actual foreign aid to those countries and the choice of a remedy by multilateral financial institutions without proper consultation of the countries concerned.

14. While his delegation recognized the recent concerted efforts of those institutions it entertained little hope that structural adjustment programmes would prove successful. The demands of well-being and development were indivisible. His delegation therefore supported the convening of a World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and appreciated the preparatory studies already under way on some of the major economic and social issues facing the international community: poverty, equity, social security and migration.

15. Turning to the issue of the family, an important element of social change, his country welcomed the celebration of the International Year of the Family and attached special interest to promoting the family, as witnessed by the introduction in 1990 of a new code on individuals and the family. In 1992, his Government had created an interministerial commission to organize the celebration of the International Year of the Family in 1994. A report on the relevant measures adopted had been sent to the appropriate authorities.

(Mr. Konkobo, Burkina Faso)

16. With regard to the issue of the elderly, considered to embody wisdom in Africa, since 1992 the Government office in charge of social welfare and the family had sought ways to preserve what had been achieved and to set national objectives with regard to the elderly. His delegation welcomed the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 47/86 on the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing aimed at integrating older persons in development.

17. The problems of youth were of particular concern in his country, where more than one half of the population was young. Young people there were considered an asset and a potential source of labour, but social and economic imbalances had upset former customs and eroded family relations. The breakdown of values, causing traditional solidarity to be replaced by individualism and the extended family by the family unit, had led to a moral decline and social disintegration marked by delinquency, prostitution, drug addiction, abandoned children and infanticide. Unemployment and illiteracy aggravated the distressing fate of the youth.

18. His country had adopted several measures to confront that situation, such as the establishment of a national employment fund and a fund to support production, which had made it possible in the past year to assist small and medium-sized businesses and to promote the socio-professional integration of young cadres. As a result, small farms had been established in the irrigated plains of the Sourou.

19. The completion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had brought with it greater awareness in his country of the problems of the disabled. The Government had begun to adopt social, economic and political measures, such as the issuing of invalidity cards entitling the bearer to various services. In that regard, he commended the efforts deployed by several NGOs in his country for the socio-professional integration of the disabled. His delegation welcomed the recommendation that all Member States should celebrate the International Day of Disabled Persons annually on 3 December.

20. In conclusion, his delegation emphasized that although the chances for social development in the developing countries had considerably declined, it refused to yield to pessimism.

21. Mr. SOTIROV (Bulgaria) said that United Nations programmes and strategies for development and national programmes of individual countries had given greater importance to social issues. However, illiteracy, hunger, homelessness and unemployment continued to prevail in many parts of the world. His delegation believed that social development issues had become truly global in scope and required international cooperation.

22. Emphasis should be placed on the interrelationship between economic and social development and other major global issues confronting mankind. There was no doubt, for instance, that the respect and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms contributed to social progress. In the area of reinforcing international security and resolving regional conflicts, it had been demonstrated that confrontation could give way to cooperation, and it would be

(Mr. Sotirov, Bulgaria)

preferable to see the same occur for social problems, which were no less important. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development, which would indubitably contribute to international security and stability.

23. The reforms required for the transition to a market economy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe carried with them social problems that those countries could not hope to resolve without international support. Despite the introduction of social security policies in Bulgaria, reforms had very badly affected the most vulnerable groups of the population. His country believed, as emphasized in section C of chapter VI of the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50), growing unemployment had become a major issue for policy makers in those countries. That problem had heavy psychological consequences, seen in the negative reaction of the population to a decline in their income and standard of living. In mid-1993, more than 14 per cent of the active population were jobless. Inflation, which in 1992 was at 80 per cent, would be at 65 per cent in 1993 and had had a negative impact on the system of social security, causing a decrease in expenditure for education and an increase in the price of medicines which had caused a drop in public spending for health care and a cut in social security benefits.

24. His country, aware of the need to impose sanctions to find a peaceful solution to situations that threatened international peace and security, was strictly applying the sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Despite the recommendation of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 724 (1991) concerning Yugoslavia (S/26040) which recognized the need to assist Bulgaria in coping with the heavy losses that it had incurred as a result of the sanctions and which had caused social programmes to suffer, the country had still not received any financial or economic assistance from the international community. His delegation was therefore of the view that the fourteenth report on the world social situation should contain precise data regarding the impact of those sanctions on the social situation of Member States that were most affected by their application.

25. Bulgaria attached particular importance to international cooperation aimed at enhancing the role of women in social, economic and political life. The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in 1995, would make it possible to review currently adopted strategies.

26. His delegation welcomed the decisions contained in resolution 45/91 on the Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. Bulgaria, which had more than 230,000 disabled persons, had instituted a national programme in 1985, and long-term programmes had been adopted at the municipal level. NGOs, in particular the Blind Union, the Federation of the Deaf, and the Union of the Disabled, had been especially active in that area. He pointed out that the 1993 World Games for Deaf People had been held in Sofia.

27. Bulgaria supported the Proclamation on Ageing (resolution 47/5) and the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing (resolution 47/86). It endeavoured to create fair conditions for retirees, who made up 30 per cent of the population.

(Mr. Sotirov, Bulgaria)

28. His delegation applauded the policies and programmes involving youth (resolution 47/85). Owing to the fact that unemployment hit that sector of the population especially hard, since 1989 400,000 persons, for the most part young and skilled, had left the country to seek better economic conditions elsewhere. In addition to official bodies, such as the newly created Committee for Youth and Sports, there were also a number of NGOs that were addressing the problems of youth in Bulgaria.

29. Bulgaria was preparing to observe the 1994 International Year of the Family. A National Coordinating Committee, made up of representatives from all the governmental bodies and NGOs, had been set up to prepare, observe and ensure the follow-up of the Year.

30. Ms. FENG CUI (China) said that the status of social development throughout the world remained grim, especially in the developing countries. In the light of the regional and national wars and conflicts, the social chaos and instability, the economic and political crises, the poverty, unemployment, famine and disease, which were in turn causing displacements and migrations, in the light, also, of the unfair economic competition, the excessive debt burden, the foreign intervention and catastrophes, both natural and man-made, the international community must make social development issues its immediate priority. Social problems, which were inseparable from economic and social progress, could endanger stability, peace and development in the world. The international community had of course scored successes, and the United Nations had done useful and encouraging work. A considerable number of activities undertaken by the United Nations had, however, registered slow progress, owing, among other things, to a lack of adequate funds.

31. Under resolution 47/92 the General Assembly had resolved to convene, in 1995, a World Summit for Social Development. At its thirty-third session (1993), the Commission for Social Development had made an in-depth study of the three core issues - poverty, unemployment and social integration - which were to be the focus of the Summit. Furthermore, during the high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council in 1993, many delegations had put forward concrete proposals for ensuring the success of the Summit. China, which was actively engaged in the preparations, wished to make the following suggestions. Firstly, the Summit should focus upon the serious economic and social issues facing the developing countries. Secondly, in order to tackle social development issues, a peaceful and stable international environment must be created and maintained, and an equitable new international economic order must be established. Thirdly, all Governments should strengthen their leadership capacity in the field of social development, and should supervise the coordination of social and economic aspects. Fourthly, a policy of equitable distribution of resources should be followed in the field of social development, and Governments should be considered duty-bound to provide basic guarantees to all members of society. Fifthly, effective, fair and comprehensive international cooperation, based upon equality and mutual benefit and respect, must be launched. Linking cooperation to preset conditions, interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, and politicizing social development questions should be avoided. Sixthly, the United Nations should accord priority to developing countries, so as to narrow

(Ms. Feng Cui, China)

the North-South gap. The developed countries should, for their part, undertake a greater number of obligations. Seventhly, the Summit should, on the basis of intensive discussions, formulate solutions as well as measures for their implementation. The Chinese Government, convinced that social development was both the starting-point and the final objective of economic development, was focusing its efforts on that sector, and had succeeded to date in feeding and clothing the great majority of its 1.1 billion citizens. In the process, it paid great attention to the legitimate rights and interests of youth, women, children, older persons and disabled persons and endeavoured to improve their well-being by adopting relevant legislation. In the previous five years, 1.26 million disabled persons had been reintegrated into society and 1.4 million had found employment. A National Coordination Committee on the disabled had recently been established, the responsibility of which was the coordination of policy guidelines and rules governing their implementation. On 6 October, the Chinese Federation for Disabled Persons had held its second National Conference, with the active support of the Government, and had formulated, for the coming five years, general development objectives on behalf of the disabled.

32. China, which enjoyed political stability and economic development, was prepared to lend its support to the work of the United Nations in the area of social development, through enhanced cooperation and exchanges, in the belief that it would thereby contribute to the development and progress of mankind.

33. Ms. ARIAS (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Group of Three (Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela), stressed that the question of social development had been addressed on many occasions in 1993, for example, at the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development and the high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council, at the international level, and at the third Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held at Salvador da Bahia, Brazil, in July, at the regional level. Illustrating the priority placed by the countries of the Group of Three on improving the social situation throughout the world and searching for solutions to the world-wide economic and social crisis, she also cited the Conference on Social Development and Poverty held in Mexico, the Latin America and the Caribbean Preparatory Meeting for the International Year of the Family, held at Cartagena, Colombia, in August, and the VIIIth World Congress on Family Law, which was scheduled to be held in Caracas, Venezuela, in November 1994.

34. The United Nations ran the risk of seriously compromising its mandate (which was to serve the cause of peace, development and security), if it failed to demonstrate that it was capable of devising a strategy for the elimination of misery, poverty and unemployment, and for the construction of a society in which human welfare was the principal objective. At the high-level debate of the Economic and Social Council, it had been widely acknowledged that an effort must be made to enhance quality of life within the context of a broader conception of freedom. That consensus should lead to concrete action at the national, regional and multilateral levels, as well as to international support for national plans of action.

(Ms. Arias, Colombia)

35. The fact that a World Summit for Social Development had been convened for the first time bespoke the urgency of the situation. The gap between developed and developing countries was deepening, condemning millions to poverty. In the developed countries, the economic recession had had serious social consequences: increased unemployment, marginalization, mounting crime and drug addiction. Each country should adopt a social strategy incorporating its own situation as well as the international context, and combining the efforts of official bodies and the private sector. The third Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government had emphasized the function of the State, which was not solely to stimulate development but to promote social justice. That social responsibility lay not only with the State but with the society as a whole; and the well-being of the people was the guarantee of social stability. Although the social programmes conducted in the countries of the Group of Three had yielded positive results, problems persisted, especially in the areas of poverty, income distribution and social services.

36. As part of the restructuring of the United Nations, the economic and social sectors must be strengthened in order to restore the balance between development objectives, peace and democracy. The Secretary-General had noted in his report on the work of the Organization (A/48/1) that it was impossible to consolidate peace and democracy without development. It was therefore essential to adopt a development agenda, enhance coordination among the social and economic bodies and establish genuine consultations with the other Bretton Woods institutions. The Secretariat must be modernized, publish the documents for the deliberative bodies on time and propose new ideas that would help to consolidate a new world order where the basic requirements of the population would be met. It would be better to devote the Organization's human and financial resources to coordinating international cooperation for development rather than to preparing superfluous reports such as the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50), a voluminous and repetitive document that reproduced information that was either known already or had not been verified.

37. The preparatory meeting for the International Year of the Family for Latin America and the Caribbean had adopted by consensus a plan of action and a series of recommendations aimed at improving the well-being of the family. The three countries had undertaken, with a view to the International Year of the Family, which would begin in January 1994, to review and update their legislation on the protection of the rights of the family and the elimination of any discrimination against the family and to strengthen national programmes to satisfy the basic needs of the family, particularly in the areas of health care, education, nutrition, sanitation, housing and employment. Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela intended to participate actively in 1994 in the substantive meetings of the preparatory committee for the World Summit for Social Development and in the other regional meetings and meetings on specific items organized as part of the preparations for the Summit.

38. Mr. JAEGER (Austria) said that the international community's growing awareness of social development problems was reflected by the many international meetings and events devoted to those questions: the proclamation of 3 December 1993 as the International Day of Disabled Persons, the observance of

(Mr. Jaeger, Austria)

an International Day of the Families (1994), the holding of an International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the convening of a World Summit for Social Development (1995), the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995) and the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (1995). Moreover, a Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Affairs had been held at Bratislava (28 June-2 July 1993) and at Geneva (28-30 June 1993), the Economic and Social Council had held high-level discussions devoted to the preparation of the World Summit for Social Development.

39. Concerning the World Summit for Social Development, th777e European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna, which was 777affiliated to the United Nations, had prepared the basic documents for the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Social Affairs. That document, which could contribute to the preparations for the World Summit, dealt primarily with the situation in Europe, in particular countries with economies in transition, analysed social policies in force, international migration and migration policies and the intensification of international cooperation in the social sphere.

40. On the occasion of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General had noted that social development was crucial not only for improving the human condition but also for enhancing economic efficiency and strengthening political democracy. Austria had from the outset supported the initiative of convening a World Summit for Social Development, and it welcomed the fact that special attention would be given to the enhancement of social integration, the alleviation and reduction of poverty and the promotion of productive employment. In view of the political, economic and social changes occurring in many parts of the world, in particular in the countries with economies in transition, the World Summit should elaborate guidelines for Governments that would permit them to address social questions more effectively. Austria was making preparations to establish a national committee for the Summit which would include all relevant segments of society, in particular the non-governmental organizations.

41. One of the most pressing problems currently facing youth was unemployment which, for different reasons, affected developing and developed countries as well as countries with economies in transition. In the developed countries, unemployment damaged the social fabric and contributed to the appearance of phenomena such as intolerance and xenophobia. In the countries with economies in transition, unemployment might seriously impede ongoing reforms. Moreover, as the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation (E/1993/50) indicated, reducing unemployment and raising productivity were essential conditions for eradicating poverty, reducing emigration pressures and mitigating political tensions in developing countries.

42. With that in mind, Austria had established in 1987 the youth employment programme HOPE 87. That programme, financed mainly by the Austrian Federal Government, had established branch offices in several countries and cooperated with international institutions such as the United Nations Educational,

(Mr. Jaeger, Austria)

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Council of Europe. In March 1992, a memorandum of understanding on the promotion of youth employment through HOPE 87 had been signed between Austria and the United Nations Office at Vienna. To date, HOPE 87 had financed 71 mostly small-scale projects (41 in Africa, 12 in Asia, 10 in Latin America and 8 in European countries). Convinced that better training could ease the access of young people to the labour market, HOPE 87 had also established training courses for young people from countries with economies in transition. In view of the encouraging results produced by the programme, the Austrian Federal Government was prepared to continue financing it.

43. The importance of questions related to ageing would continue to grow. In Austria, as in other European countries, the proportion of people over the age of 65 would continue to increase; according to the Vienna-based Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, that trend was likely to occur even more rapidly in the least developed countries. He recalled General Assembly resolution 46/91 on the Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing and related activities and the annex to that resolution, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons aimed at guaranteeing the independence, participation, self-fulfilment and dignity of older persons and guaranteeing them access to adequate care. The General Assembly had also adopted, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, a Proclamation on Ageing (resolution 47/5). Pursuant to the appeal of that resolution, Austria had introduced, in April 1993, a reform of the provisions of legal pensions, the main goal of which was to ensure the long-term financing of the pension system by restructuring the adjustment and revaluation of pensions. The Austrian Government had also tried to make the pension scheme more equitable by providing, particularly for women who had stopped working for a certain period of time, an improved pension system that took into account the years devoted to child rearing. Furthermore, the pensions for those who had to retire very early for health reasons would be raised. In July 1993, a Federal Act on Care Allowance had gone into force under which care benefits would be allocated to all persons needing care, including older persons. In view of the fact that the number of people needing care would rise, the Austrian authorities had set priorities for the coming decade, which would allow them to select from various flexible retirement schemes, live independently without being left alone, obtain ambulatory care while fully participating in social life. Those initiatives, in addition to the special attention to be paid to the quality of housing showed that the social policy for older persons in Austria reflected, to a very large extent, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

44. The proclamation of 3 December 1993 by the General Assembly as the International Day of Disabled Persons on the occasion of the conclusion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, clearly demonstrated the great importance that the United Nations attached to the improvement of the living conditions of the disabled. That importance had been reaffirmed by the World Conference on Human Rights which had devoted a chapter to the rights of the disabled persons in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The Conference had called upon the General Assembly to adopt the Standard Rules on

(Mr. Jaeger, Austria)

the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities which had been elaborated at the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna and recommended by the Commission for Social Development.

45. At the national level, Austria had adopted a policy based on the World Programme of Action which sought to guarantee disabled persons an independent life and encourage their participation in economic and social life. For example, it had made substantial efforts to improve the quality of medical care and rehabilitation provided to disabled persons.

46. The international community was aware, in particular, of the family's decisive role as the fundamental unit of society. Austria, for its part, was participating actively in the preparation of the International Year of the Family, had contributed to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family and was currently financing the post of a social expert working for the secretariat of the United Nations Office at Vienna. Moreover, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/293), further in-kind contributions had been offered by a number of Austrian citizens and private-sector companies. The report also highlighted the remarkable work done by the Coordinator for the International Year of the Family and his staff despite almost insurmountable budgetary constraints. In that connection, it was regrettable that those constraints had prevented the Coordinator from coming to New York to present the report on the preparations for the International Year of the Family personally. He was to be commended, however, on his effectiveness and professionalism.

47. The preparations launched in Austria for the observance of the International Year of the Family were at an advanced stage. A national committee had been established in Vienna under the auspices of the Federal Minister for Environment, Youth and Family and 15 national working groups had begun to consider various family-related themes: the International Year of the Family would be officially inaugurated on 10 December 1993 at a large-scale conference to be held at the Austria Centre in Vienna, for which the Federal Minister for Environment, Youth and Family had already presented a position paper on the new culture of families in Austria.

48. In conclusion, he welcomed the fact that the Assembly, in resolution 47/237, had decided to proclaim 15 May as the International Day of Families and stressed that his Government hoped the International Year of the Family would provide an occasion for elaborating a declaration on the roles, responsibilities and rights of the family.

49. Miss SAHLI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, despite the climate of harmony and understanding which seemed to prevail in international relations, a good many problems confronting States, particularly socio-economic problems, had not yet been truly resolved. The current world economic situation was not very heartening, particularly in developing countries that had been unable to achieve their social development objectives. Moreover, in many countries, structural adjustment had had very severe social consequences which had affected the most vulnerable and destitute groups and had caused a proliferation of such phenomena as unemployment, poverty, hunger and an increase in the number of economic asylum-seekers and refugees. That, in turn, had stirred up resentment and

(Miss Sahli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

violence, pushed up the crime rate and the number of drug addicts, forced some persons into exile and sparked the rise of new forms of racism, thus jeopardizing the security of the societies affected.

50. It was unacceptable, moreover, that one fourth of the planet's inhabitants, most of whom were in the third world, lived in abject poverty, were victims of hunger and disease and were illiterate, and that three fourths of world income went to 16 per cent of the inhabitants of developed countries. Under such conditions, social development that was both just and durable was impossible. The developed countries must therefore reorient their economic policies and strategies towards encouraging the development of the world economy and thereby promoting social justice: they must cease to engage in discriminatory practices and to impose arbitrary economic and commercial measures on developing countries, which compromised social development and constituted a flagrant attack on freedoms.

51. It was also essential to increase public awareness of social policies, focus greater attention on education and training, which were of crucial importance to social development, continue encouraging citizens to participate in the elaboration and implementation of social policy, and make the most of the Plan of Action for People's Participation in Rural Development, adopted by the 1991 Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

52. Recalling that a great many young people from the third world chose to leave their countries in order to upgrade their living conditions and that crime, drug use and violence, which were essentially due to unemployment and poverty, were very widespread among youth, she stressed that all necessary measures must be taken in order to enable youth to enjoy their rights, hold jobs and make an effective contribution to development. The observance of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year in 1995 should also focus attention on the problems of youth and elicit proposals on how to solve them. She stressed that the programme of action of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, adopted at the Paris Conference, should be implemented.

53. Recalling that her country had been one of the first to draw attention to the problem of disabled persons, advocating, in particular, the proclamation of an International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, she said that the observance in 1992 of the tenth anniversary of the Year had helped to increase awareness among world opinion of the rights and needs of disabled persons. Inviting the international community to integrate disabled persons more fully into society, she also stressed that the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons should be maintained and that action should be taken to ensure the full implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

54. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had promulgated a number of laws on disabled persons, had accorded them certain privileges and material advantages (medical care, rehabilitation, jobs, tax exemptions), established a national commission for the disabled, sought to encourage the integration of disabled persons into society, set up centres and institutions for disabled persons in a number of towns and villages and included disabled persons in decision-making.

(Miss Sahli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

55. The elderly, who had given so much to society and therefore deserved respect, comprised a rapidly growing population group, which posed tremendous socio-economic problems for States. The implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, which would end in 2002 and whose goal was to ensure the protection and well-being of the elderly, was therefore vital.

56. The family - the fundamental unit of all societies, which provided all sorts of social services and which could, if it were cohesive, remedy scores of social problems - was, in many countries, particularly the developing countries, racked by all kinds of tensions brought on by the deterioration of socio-economic conditions that put it severely to the test and at times caused its break-up. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya therefore believed that, to begin with, a long-term specifically family-oriented strategy should be elaborated during the International Year of the Family in 1994. It also supported the idea of issuing an international declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of the family and believed that the recommendations contained in the Declaration issued at the close of the preparatory meeting for the International Year of the Family held at Tunis should be taken into account. At the national level, it had established a national preparatory commission for the International Year of the Family.

57. Her delegation noted that, as it had in the past, the United Nations played a pioneering role and put forward many proposals that were subsequently adopted by the international community and then incorporated into national legislation. She also stressed that the conferences and other events that would take place in 1994 and 1995 would provide an opportunity to evaluate objectively the results achieved and analyse rationally the factors that had impeded the implementation of social development plans and strategies. She hoped, in particular, that the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, on which she pinned great hope, would be able to lay the groundwork for durable social development that would support States' efforts to respond to their inhabitants' social needs and remedy the social ills afflicting the planet by according priority to the attainment of the objectives contained in the declarations. Lastly, she stressed that the United Nations should contribute more actively to modifying the negative trends that were becoming apparent in the world by more precisely evaluating and targetting its studies of such trends with a view to the concrete and objective treatment of the problems that would arise in the years to come. She hoped that the restructuring of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs would enable the United Nations to play an effective role in the field of social development.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
13th meeting
held on
Thursday, 21 October 1993
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KUKAN (Slovakia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 109: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/48/24, A/48/56-E/1993/6, A/48/207, A/48/289, A/48/291, A/48/293, A/48/462, A/48/476, A/48/484; A/C.3/48/L.2, L.3, L.4; E/1993/50/Rev.1)

1. Ms. HJERTAAS (Norway) said that young people, who made up more than half of the inhabitants of the planet, were, in many countries and for various reasons, obliged to wait longer until they were taken into consideration as full members of society.

2. The current period was characterized by unprecedented political change with the end of the cold war, progress in South Africa and the conclusion of the Washington agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Governments had a duty to support those positive developments by providing the United Nations with the resources it needed.

3. Furthermore, countries must meet their political responsibilities with regard to young people by enabling them to participate in preparing their own future. Young people had a contribution to make by informing leaders of their concerns and their vision of the future. Admittedly, young people were not a homogeneous group. It was for that reason that cooperation at the international and national levels between young people's organizations, and tolerance and solidarity, were so important. In spite of differences between living standards, political opinions, religious belief and ethnic origin, young people throughout the world shared common ideas such as the rejection of war and love of peace.

4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, recognized the right of children and young people to education. That right must be respected since it was not only in the interest of young people but also that of society as a whole that young people should be educated. It was an investment in the future. Although most of the United Nations Member States had ratified the Convention, it was not being implemented. Whilst it acknowledged that children had specific rights in addition to the fundamental human rights, the most basic rights of children and young people were being ignored. In that regard it was enough to cite the case of children living in shanty towns, street children and child victims of prostitution. The international community should therefore achieve the impossible to ensure that the Convention became more than just words.

5. In all societies the family had primary responsibility for ensuring children's welfare. It must be given the means to do so. However, when there were problems within the family, society must take responsibility for protecting the child. The appointment of an ombudsman or mediator might be the best way of defending young people's interest at the international and at the national levels. It was equally important to encourage the creation of organizations to represent children and young people for all human beings, no matter what their age, sex or race, had the right to make their voices heard.

6. Mr. ALGHANIM (Saudi Arabia) said that the Saudi Government was aware of the crucial importance of social services whether they were provided by the Government or by private organizations. It had therefore mobilized the necessary funds to formulate policies and implement programmes for the disabled. The Ministry of Education, for example, had responsibility within the field of education for persons suffering from a disability whatever the origin of that disability. Throughout Saudi Arabia there were special institutions for the deaf, the blind and the mentally disabled. For its part, the Ministry of Social Affairs dealt with the rehabilitation, training and social security of disabled persons. The Housing Ministry ensured that all citizens, including the disabled, were appropriately housed. The private sector also contributed to social welfare.

7. The Regional Bureau of the Middle East Committee for the Affairs of the Blind was located in Saudi Arabia and its mission was to assist the visually impaired in the country and in the region. The Regional Bureau organized the distribution of books and had set up libraries with works in Braille. It had even provided a transcription of the Koran in Braille. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia was working together with other countries of the region in connection with the social integration of disabled persons.

8. He thanked the Ad Hoc Working Group for the quality of its work in drawing up the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. With regard to the rule on awareness-raising he considered that it was vitally important to encourage greater awareness among Governments and society as a whole of the problems of disabled persons. It was crucial to realize that disabled persons could, if they were given the chance, make a valuable contribution to society. Rule 2, which dealt with medical care, was just as important, since it had been noted that in 60 per cent of cases the disabilities could have been avoided if care had been given in time. In connection with Rule 3 he remarked that rehabilitation and training played a key role in the integration of disabled persons. That also applied to education which was covered by Rule 6. As for employment which was addressed by Rule 7, the lack of possibilities open to disabled persons in that field was due to the fact that society did not know how to benefit from the resources of disabled persons and did not acknowledge that they had the same rights as the rest of the population. It was therefore important in that field, as in others, that disabled persons should enjoy the same advantages as other members of society. With regard to Rule 11, on recreation and sports, it was essential that disabled persons should be able to take up disciplines such as the plastic arts. They should also be able to participate in all sorts of recreational activities including sporting events.

9. The organizations representing the disabled should meet their responsibilities by participating in decision-making which concerned the disabled so as to help Governments accomplish their humanitarian mission. International cooperation between governmental organizations was an important way of assisting disabled persons, in particular in developing countries where 80 per cent of the world's disabled persons lived.

10. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had met a real need and would be of enormous utility to Governments, particularly those of developing countries which were concerned to

(Mr. Alghanim, Saudi Arabia)

ensure equal rights for disabled persons. He therefore wished to encourage all countries to implement the Rules by making the necessary resources available to that end.

11. Mr. LAZARO (Peru) stated that his delegation was pleased that the first stage of the preparatory process for the World Summit for Social Development was progressing so well. As anticipated, the Preparatory Committee had held its organizational meeting in April 1993. The question of the Summit had been discussed at the most recent high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council; at its 33rd meeting the Commission for Social Development had devoted much attention to the goals of the Summit; two meetings of experts had taken place on that subject under the auspices of the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden; and the Regional Committees had begun their own preparations. That first phase had yielded three results: conceptual enhancement of the three goals set out in resolution 47/92, recognition of the need for greater participation on the part of non-governmental organizations in the area of social development, and mobilization of the United Nations Secretariat in preparation for the Summit. It also demonstrated the existence of a broad consensus concerning the nature of social development and the interdependence of social integration, poverty reduction, and job creation within the framework of a healthy economic policy and a favourable international financial climate. In that regard, the Secretary-General's report on the World Summit for Social Development, which also discussed the role of the United Nations system in the promotion of social development (E/1993/77), was of particular interest. It also confirmed the need for close cooperation between the State, the society and the market.

12. Peru would prefer the Preparatory Committee to place more emphasis, at its 2nd meeting, on the political dimensions of the question of social development. In its view, social, political and economic questions were linked, and social development had an essential role to play in not only improving the human condition but also in promoting economic progress and creating an environment compatible with political democracy.

13. Up to the present, the United Nations had concentrated mainly on questions related to peace-keeping and international security, at the expense of social progress. Indeed, it had been assumed that social progress would be the logical outgrowth of progress achieved in those spheres. The difficulties currently encountered by the international community in its efforts to resolve conflict had arisen from that miscalculation.

14. The most ambitious initiatives and the best conceived programmes of the United Nations had failed to eliminate the scourge of poverty. This was because two elements had been lacking: a consensus on underlying issues, and the creative will to resolve problems such as intolerance, ethnic cleansing, nationalism, xenophobia and racism, which indubitably had social roots.

15. Taking those elements into account, the Preparatory Committee should, at its 2nd meeting, explore means of integrating the social question into all measures implemented within the context of preventive diplomacy. Peru attached singular importance to that task. In that regard, it suggested that excessively

(Mr. Lazaro, Peru)

dogmatic language should be avoided so as not to diminish the scope of the political message that must issue from the World Summit.

16. In order to ground its work in practical reality, the Committee should consider two characteristics of the contemporary world, the spread of a certain way of life resulting from the communications revolution, and the globalization of the economy. Globalization could facilitate cooperation with regard to world-wide social problems, given the coordination of macroeconomic policy, the promotion of trade, and the protection of the environment.

17. In the view of Peru, a closer and more active relationship should be established with the Bretton Woods institutions. UNDP did, of course, play a decisive role in that field, owing to the working relations that it had established with those institutions in the developing countries. Ideally, a more effective mechanism could be instituted so that all parties could contribute technically as well as politically. At an appropriate moment, his delegation intended to propose that an ad hoc group should be created to study that question.

18. He stated that, having launched a successful anti-inflation and economic stabilization campaign, and attained the re-entry of Peru into the international financial community, his Government had undertaken a broad social programme on behalf of the most disadvantaged groups of society. That programme, designed to assist three and a half million impoverished people, had the following objectives: to create jobs and income sources in marginalized rural and urban zones, to supply food aid to the most vulnerable groups, and to improve the quality of basic health services. It drew on the organizational capacities and collective efforts of low-income population groups, as well as on the participation of Peruvian society as a whole and on various public institutions.

19. In conclusion, he stated that the United Nations needed to demonstrate some imagination and willingness to change if it wished to make the qualitative changes that now as ever were required in the social domain.

20. Mr. EL-DEEB (Egypt) said that the Government of his country accorded high priority to social development in its policies and programmes, drawing upon Egyptian cultural heritage and Islamic culture, the aspiration of the latter of which was to exalt human life on all planes, material and spiritual, in the respect for human rights and the satisfaction of the essential needs of people.

21. In Egypt, community associations and governmental bodies played a primary role in social development. In the view of his delegation, social development and economic development must go hand in hand. Economic growth was indeed indispensable for the creation of an environment compatible with human development and with the implementation of social programmes, like, for instance, social welfare, the creation of jobs, the construction of sanitary housing and education.

22. International cooperation must be strengthened in the area of development in order to achieve a balance between the supply and demand of resources and to lay the groundwork for a lasting peace. Comprehensive plans must be formulated to reduce the gap between rich and poor in the hopes of eliminating the causes

(Mr. El-Deeb, Egypt)

of economic and social conflict, which in turn often bred political and military struggles.

23. Egypt attached great importance to the World Summit for Social Development, and declared its willingness to work with the Preparatory Committee at its 2nd meeting, which was scheduled for early 1994. It had studied document A/48/476 with interest, particularly the parts pertaining to ECA and ESCWA. Furthermore, it reiterated its endorsement of the substance of document A/48/56, on the implementation of the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies in the Near Future.

24. With regard to disabled people, his delegation considered that they should be fully integrated into society, and supported the provisions in that respect set forth in documents A/C.3/48/L.2 and L.3. It also stressed the importance of the International Year of the Family, to be held in 1994, along with the preparatory meetings, which promised to provide a useful exchange of experience.

25. Population issues were of great significance for social development, and the time had come to undertake substantial programmes in that field. In that regard the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994, had a major role to play, and Egypt was fully prepared to cooperate at every level to ensure its success.

26. Ms. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that the issues before the Committee in the current year were particularly important for society everywhere and that their consideration ought to result in the adoption of a substantial number of measures at the local and international levels. Yemen considered it right to place the emphasis on social development and the right to development, the latter having been reaffirmed in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna in June 1993. Her country had high hopes for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 1995, in that it should be helpful in implementing social principles already adopted at the international level.

27. Her delegation had studied the Secretary-General's report (A/48/56) with great interest and fully supported the statement in paragraph 13 (a) that an effective social policy should further validate individual dignity and worth, and promote consideration of those who were disadvantaged or dysfunctional as unused human resources.

28. The international community should seek to develop effective strategies to help improve the situation of those living in developing countries and narrow the gap between rich and poor countries. Such strategies should be aimed at resolving the world's economic and social problems, promoting growth and contributing to reducing poverty and making full use of human resources.

29. Humankind and the satisfaction of its needs were the raison d'être of growth. The aims of the Declaration on Social Progress and Development were thus very relevant. Social development was a complicated issue and the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit had a difficult task before it, since on it depended the success of the Summit. The Chilean Ambassador, Mr. Somavia, should be congratulated on the role he was playing as Chairman of the

(Ms. Al-Hamami, Yemen)

Preparatory Committee. Social development was increasingly important, at all levels. That was clear from the fact that Governments were reflecting social questions in their development plans and taking more action on social matters, as was indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the International Year of the Family (A/48/293).

30. Her Government was making every effort to link the family with economic and social development, according to the principles of solidarity which formed the basis of Yemeni society, and was preparing to observe the International Year of the Family in 1994. It was to be hoped that the international community would show commitment to resolving the problems that existed in relation to the family in all the countries of the world.

31. Mr. SOMAVIA (Chile), speaking as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, said that the living conditions of peoples throughout the world demonstrated the need to give priority to combating poverty and unemployment and to promoting social integration as essential factors for stability, security and peace. It was a difficult task and, as the Secretary-General had stated in a message to his Committee, new interpretations of social policy and development had to be worked out, encompassing every aspect of life - social, economic and environmental - and efforts had to be made to promote a society in which each individual had the potential and the opportunity to become involved in development.

32. The Economic and Social Council, in its high-level debate on social development, had evidenced a remarkable convergence of views in its analysis of the world social situation and had affirmed that the political importance of social questions fully justified calling a meeting at heads of State level. In its final document the Council had analysed what it called "the social crisis of the 1990s", which was summed up in the core issues on the agenda of the Summit. In that regard he stressed the importance of exchanging information, giving a new direction to social policies and finding innovative formulas for interaction between the social functions of the State, the reactions of the market and the imperatives of sustainable development.

33. The debates had underlined the need for the Summit to produce specific results. Among the measures proposed had been the idea, put forward by some, of an "Agenda for people", which would define the principles of social development, as well as social responsibilities and ways of carrying them out. It would make the improvement of the conditions of life for human beings a central concern, at every level.

34. The preparatory process currently under way was a threefold one. The high level of representation was the most important aspect, given the political nature of the decisions which would have to be adopted and the need to ensure their effective application, as well as the relatively short duration of the proceedings: three sessions of 10 days each. In that regard it would be necessary to press on with negotiations in order to reach substantive decisions that would be binding.

35. Another aspect, linked with the first, was the composition of the Preparatory Committee's Bureau. It was made up of 11 members and would ensure

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

adequate representation for the various regions. He would make sure that the Bureau played its full part in directing the work and following it up, as well as identifying any possible problems and formulating relevant suggestions and recommendations.

36. Important work had already been done both by the United Nations and by the countries themselves. One of the tasks of the Preparatory Committee would be to appraise the situation with regard to the commitments that had been made and to evaluate the prospects offered by the major United Nations programmes of action, including those on health, education and children. The Summit would also give countries the opportunity to assess their social programmes and strategies, to exchange information on their successes and to identify the reasons for any failures.

37. The objectives of the World Summit were to define future priorities in social development and to devise mechanisms to evaluate the progress accomplished in combating poverty, the creation of productive employment and the adoption of measures to deal with such new phenomena as growth without job creation.

38. The issue of the status of women, in all its aspects (integration, the elimination of discrimination and the feminization of poverty and unemployment), was to be seen in that context. It appeared that all examples of successful social policy had promoted the integration of women. Interaction between the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995, should be strengthened forthwith.

39. The situation in the least developed countries, particularly those of Africa where the main themes to be dealt with at the World Summit were of particular relevance, should also be among the major concerns of the Preparatory Committee and of the Summit.

40. He also underlined the importance of resources. The responsibility for financing social development was essentially that of the countries themselves, but it was not possible for all programmes to be financed by means of internal resources. Nor should external sources be limited to funds channelled through cooperation. There were other possibilities and an imaginative approach was required.

41. The presence of heads of State was therefore indispensable at the World Summit. It was they who, at the national level, determined social priorities. The World Summit would offer them a unique opportunity to play that role, with their counterparts, at the international level.

42. At the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee, held in April 1993, a great deal had been accomplished. The decisions adopted related to the practical organization of the Summit (dates, inter-sessional meetings, organization of work, tentative timetable for meetings, topics for sessions). The decisions also dealt with actions to be taken by Member States (national committees, organization of public debates on the main issues, writing of reports, mobilization of voluntary contributions). They also dealt with related matters (participation of non-governmental organizations, meetings of

(Mr. Somavia, Chile)

experts). Before the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat should launch an information programme on the Summit and have completed the necessary documentation for the Preparatory Committee's work. The Preparatory Committee had almost a year and a half to conduct negotiations and draw up the documents which would be submitted for adoption to the heads of State and Government in Copenhagen in 1995. The process was off to a good start.

43. He felt it necessary, however, to express his concern regarding certain matters. Firstly, he wished to be assured that resources from the regular budget would be allocated to the World Summit, as had been the case for the Conferences dealing with human rights, population and women. That question should be considered in the Fifth Committee. In addition, the regional commissions had been requested in paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 47/92 to study the social situation, to formulate proposals and to prepare an integrated report on the social situation in their region, which would be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session. It was regrettable that the reports which had been submitted, except for that of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, dealt more with questions of procedure than with questions of substance, although in most of the regional commissions high-quality studies had been carried out relating to the questions on the agenda of the Summit.

44. It was important to devote as much energy to the follow-up of the Summit as to its preparation. It was advisable already to think of how to implement the decisions which would be taken at the Summit. The Governments alone would not be responsible for their implementation; civil society would also play an important role, which was why it was important that political parties, business groups, workers, religious denominations, the media, voluntary and non-governmental organizations should be urged to take part in the debates.

45. He endorsed the recommendation in paragraph 15 of the conclusions of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council that the Preparatory Committee should draw away from bureaucratic negotiating styles and adopt an action-oriented format so as to maximize the potential for agreement.

46. While recognizing that the Department of Public Information was trying, within the limits of its resources, to sensitize opinion on social matters, he was concerned that, almost a year after the adoption of the resolution relating to the World Summit, an appropriate information programme had as yet not been drawn up.

47. He urged the participants not to lose sight of the main objective, namely the success of the Summit; those who would most benefit from it were the millions of human beings who lived in conditions which were incompatible with human dignity.

48. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark) observed that the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons had ended the previous year without any tangible improvement in the situation of the growing number of disabled people. It was therefore extremely urgent to define a global strategy for disability in the year 2000 and beyond. In that connection, it was of the utmost importance that the Third

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

Committee should keep on its agenda the question of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and remind Member States of their obligations towards such persons. Denmark welcomed the initiative taken by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in proclaiming the period from 1992 to 2002, as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

49. More than a billion people in the world lived in absolute poverty. They included the majority of disabled who lived in developing countries. That was why the eradication of poverty was one of the main objectives of the Danish foreign aid policy. The World Summit for Social Development, which would be held in Denmark in March 1995, would be an opportunity for heads of State and Government to meet for the first time in order to examine questions of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, which were of particular concern to marginalized groups, including the disabled. It was also the first time that NGOs had been invited to play an active role in the preparation of a summit meeting, and the Danish organizations of disabled people intended to do so. Governments ought to contribute financially to NGO activities in relation to the Summit, either by directly financing such activities or by contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Fund to finance NGO participation from the least developed countries.

50. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June of the current year had represented a milestone for the disabled. It was the first time that disabled people as such had been included in a general human rights document. The Declaration of Vienna asserted the right of all individuals, disabled and otherwise, without restrictions of any nature to the full enjoyment of the rights set forth in the human rights instruments. The Declaration of Vienna had also recognized the right of all to active participation in all aspects of society, which meant that disabled people's right to integration had become a human rights issue. In future, in the event of incapacitated individuals being refused equal opportunities for any reason, the authorities responsible would be called upon to admit that they had infringed the provisions of the Declaration of Vienna.

51. In its resolution 47/88 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to review the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to include an evaluation of the way a society treated its disabled citizens as a factor of the quality of life in that society. In July 1993, UNDP had hosted a meeting at Geneva for the purpose of developing a disability index in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Division. During that informal meeting, at which the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had been represented alongside Nordic organizations of disabled persons, it had been agreed not only to include the disability index in the UNDP Human Development Report, but also to link it to the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities. The best way to combine those elements in the United Nations disability strategy in coming years would be to base the disability index on the standard rules so that each rule received a coefficient from zero to five, depending on the degree of compliance. Once Member States started sending UNDP an annual disability report, it would be able to publish an indicator of the

(Mr. Kallehauge, Denmark)

status of disabled persons in each country. The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People planned to address that question at the disability session of the World Summit for Social Development. Monitoring was an essential part of any set of rules, no matter how flawless. That was why Denmark supported the appointment of a special rapporteur who would be expressly responsible for monitoring the implementation of the standard rules.

52. The Nordic countries had a long development assistance tradition that was shared by their organizations of disabled persons, which ran third world programmes. However, when those organizations offered their assistance, they failed to elicit interest. He hoped that third world countries would respond positively to the offer of special education programmes, including programmes for disabled children, young people and women. Because of the role played by women in society, programmes for disabled women were especially important.

53. Mrs. SHERMAN-PETER (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development and the increased activity in the social development field reflected the importance the United Nations now attached to the provisions of the Charter aimed at promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. She hoped that work in that area would not be disrupted by the transfer to New York of the functions of the former Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna. The United Nations should always be a position to assist Governments seeking to strengthen their capacity to address their social development issues. Such assistance was critical for developing countries, including the members of CARICOM.

54. Helping Governments to integrate the disabled fully into society should be a priority. In that connection, it was evident that the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons had not really attained its objectives. It was necessary to move from awareness-raising to action. The standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities, which the CARICOM countries wholeheartedly endorsed, were a step in that direction since they provided for monitoring mechanisms. The CARICOM countries supported the proposal to appoint a special rapporteur on that question, but they were surprised that it was the intention for the work of that special rapporteur to be funded from extrabudgetary resources. It was important to ensure that that work was not halted for lack of contributions. The CARICOM countries thought that the proposal to create a position of interregional adviser on the standard rules was also useful, particularly for developing countries. They believed that, together, the standard rules and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons provided an important framework for national and international action in that area.

55. Nevertheless, the CARICOM States thought it would be useful to develop a long-term strategy in the field of disability based on the report of the group of experts that had met at Vancouver in April 1992. They approved the decision to review the draft strategy at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in order to give Governments more time to make specific proposals for the strategy. Lastly, they supported the proclamation of 3 December as the International Day of Disabled Persons. It was essential to maintain the

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

Voluntary Fund on Disability, which had been most useful during the Decade of Disabled Persons and continued to play an important role.

56. Cooperation with the United Nations in the context of the Decade was proceeding, and continued to produce important results. The International Conference of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities had taken steps to ensure that the activities of the Decade continued to receive attention at the highest political level. Such initiatives were encouraging, and she hoped that measures would be taken to meet the needs of disabled persons more effectively in the years ahead.

57. With respect to older persons, the members of CARICOM saw the global targets on ageing for the year 2001 as a framework for future activities in that area. They were pleased that 1999 had been designated as the International Year of Older Persons and that an International Day for the Elderly had also been established.

58. They hoped that the celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year would give new impetus to the work of the United Nations in that important area. That was why the CARICOM countries were monitoring with interest the work being done by the Commission for Social Development on a draft world youth programme of action to the year 2000 and beyond.

59. The CARICOM States welcomed the efforts being made to prepare for the International Year of the Family, both at the international level, through the Commission for Social Development, which was the preparatory body for the Year, and at the national level, through the coordinating committees established by the countries. Owing to the convergence of a number of socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors, the question of the family had acquired especial importance. The number of single-parent families headed by women continued to rise rapidly. Furthermore, the fact that women earned much less than men had a very negative impact on the standard of living of those families. The International Year of the Family should stimulate Governments to develop comprehensive family policies. Realizing the objectives of the International Year of the Family implied respecting the rights established in such instruments as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, both of which the CARICOM countries had signed or ratified.

60. The members of CARICOM were aware of the partnership role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with Governments and the international community as a whole, and they were pleased to note that the World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family would be held on Malta from 28 November to 2 December 1993.

61. The 1993 Report on the World Social Situation illustrated the increasing complexity and seriousness of the difficulties many countries faced as a result of persistent debt, structural adjustment policies and turbulence in the world economy. The members of CARICOM hoped that, with the help of the World Summit for Social Development and the current enthusiasm for social development issues, the next report on the world social situation would be decidedly more positive.

(Mrs. Sherman-Peter, Bahamas)

62. In that context the CARICOM States believed that the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future adopted in 1987 remained just as relevant today. The issue at the World Summit for Social Development would be to establish priorities. Social problems contributed to political instability, conflict and strife. The World Summit would provide an opportunity for developing a new concept of security which should be people-centred, as the Secretary-General had suggested in his report "An Agenda for Peace". The Summit would also have to bear in mind that the social and economic aspects of development were inseparable. Above all, it would have to try to devise strategies which would assist both the developed countries and the developing countries to find responses to social problems and to give renewed hope to people everywhere.

63. The States of the Caribbean Community intended to participate fully in the Summit and in its preparatory activities. In that connection, it was very important for Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the Trust Fund for the World Summit for Social Development.

64. Mr. RIABIKA (Ukraine) said that the accelerated development of science and technology had not put an end to famine, poverty or disease, that the disparities between developed and developing countries continued to widen, and that in the countries in transition social tensions were increasing in step with unemployment. In the latter countries the situation was sometimes aggravated by armed conflicts which inflicted hardships and privations on the people. At the same time the sharp worsening of the social and economic living standards of a great part of the population was skilfully turned to advantage by some people to further their political ambitions and it was creating new sources of tension. The recent events in Moscow provided one example. The social problems of countries throughout the world, and in particular the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, were described in detail in the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation.

65. During his recent visit to Ukraine the Secretary-General of the United Nations had outlined in his address to the Parliament three major areas of United Nations activity: the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of economic and social development, and the observance of human rights. Ukraine fully supported the activities in those areas, which it regarded as equally important and closely interconnected. It believed that the solution of social problems required the coordinated efforts of all States regardless of their level of development, and it therefore welcomed the decision of the General Assembly to hold the World Summit for Social Development which would be focused on social integration, mitigation of poverty, and creation of productive jobs. The Summit was to be held in 1995, the year in which the United Nations would be reviewing a half century of work. The Fourth World Conference on Women was also to be held in 1995, preceded in 1994 by the International Conference on Population and Development and the International Year of the Family. All those events would promote international cooperation in the social field.

66. The countries of Eastern Europe, and Ukraine in particular, were experiencing serious social difficulties. Since the beginning of 1993 the gross national product of Ukraine had decreased by 10 per cent over 1992. Consumer

(Mr. Riabika, Ukraine)

spending had been increasing faster than income. Industrial production continued to decline, and food production had fallen by 15 per cent in comparison with 1992.

67. In such circumstances Ukraine was heavily affected by the consequences of the sanctions imposed against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The sanctions had caused Ukraine losses estimated at $3 billion. They had led to a surge in unemployment, lower salaries, and a reduction of navigation on the Danube - all factors which damaged the welfare of the people, in particular the most vulnerable groups: the disabled, pensioners, children and young people. In that connection Ukraine supported the position stated earlier by Bulgaria.

68. Despite the unfavourable circumstances the provision of assistance to disabled persons who were unable to maintain themselves by work was one of the priorities of the Ukrainian Government. The Parliament had adopted a package of laws designed inter alia to protect such persons.

69. Unfortunately, no matter what measures were taken for the social protection of the people, their impact on actual living standards was very small. Ukraine as a whole and the Republic of Crimea in particular had to cope with the specific problem of the social protection of people forcibly deported during the Stalinist era who were now returning to their homelands. More than half a million people - Tartars, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, and people of other nationalities - were preparing to return to the Crimea. That would mean an enormous burden for Ukraine and the Republic of Crimea which they would have to bear alone without having the necessary resources. Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, where those people had lived and participated in the creation of material wealth, ought to contribute to solving the problem.

70. The Ukrainian delegation appreciated the work of the Economic Commission for Europe, which now had 53 member States, in the area of social development and cooperation and in particular the activities carried out in 1993, including the European Population Conference and in March 1993 in Geneva, the Preparatory Meeting for Europe and North America for the International Year of the Family held in April 1993 in Valetta, Malta, and the Conference of European Ministers responsible for social affairs which took place in June 1993 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

71. The time had come for the United Nations to move on from the empirical analysis of social problems to the exploration of the possibilities of furnishing practical assistance to improve the social situation in the world.

72. Mr. USWATTE-ARATCHI (Chief of the Development Analysis Branch of the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that he would first respond to the comments made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia. With regard to the first comment, concerning the delay in publishing the Report on the World Social Situation, an explanation had been given in document E/1993/24 addressed to the Economic and Social Council. As to the second comment, that the Secretariat had not indicated the source of the information contained in the Report on the World Social Situation, the publication did not contain a single table which did not

(Mr. Uswatte-Aratchi)

carry an indication of the source of the information. A cursory examination of the document would demonstrate that point. The third comment had been to the effect that the Report did not contain any new information and depended on material contained in other reports. The Committee should refer to paragraph 13 of resolution 45/87 entitled "World social situation", in which the General Assembly invited United Nations bodies to provide "all relevant information pertaining to their respective spheres of competence". The author of the Report on the World Social Situation had used that information and had duly cited his sources. It was difficult to see how a report on the world social situation could be written without using information from ILO, UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, the United Nations Statistical Office, and the Population Division. All similar reports, such as the Human Development Report or the World Development Report, depended on such data. The representative of Colombia had also pointed to the need to improve the Report on the World Social Situation. No one could disagree. The 1993 Report was a substantial improvement over the 1989 Report, which he had also written, and it was to be hoped that the 1997 Report would be even better. In any event, even if it was not perfect, the Report was at least useful. That was demonstrated by the fact that in August 1993 an order had been received for 210 copies but supplies had already run out. If the market was the final arbiter, the 1993 Report on the World Social Situation was not too bad a publication.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.